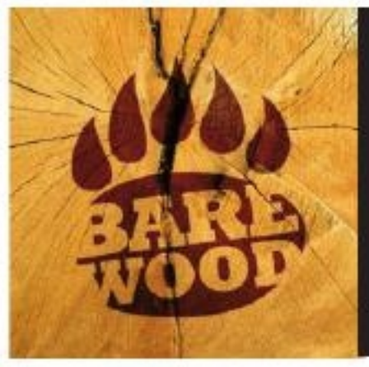
Oxfordshire Guardian

DIDCOT EDITION



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Andrew has close shave for charity p3

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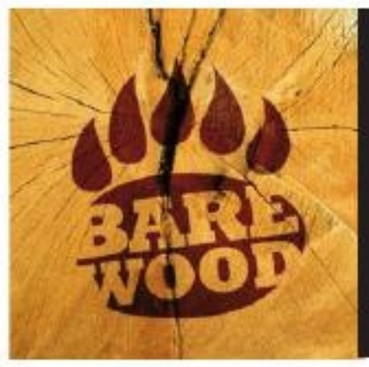

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SCRUTINISED

Police response to teenager's death investigated by IPCC

Another town gets faster broadband
See page 17

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

THAMES Valley Police's "response" and "subsequent actions" to the disappearance of teenager Jayden Parkinson is being investigated by the force's watchdog.

Jayden's body was found in an established grave in the Great Western Cemetery next to All Saints Church, Didcot, on December 18 last year.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is investigating the response of Thames Valley Police to a missing person's report submitted on December 4.

Police referred the matter to the IPCC on December 14 and an independent investigation began.

IPCC Associate Commissioner Guido Liguori said: "Our investigation is examining the response of Thames Valley Police to the missing person's report, and whether the individual and collective decisions made by police officers or staff and the related actions were appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances.

"I am mindful that a murder investigation is continuing and therefore we must be cautious about the information we make public so as not to interfere with the ongoing criminal proceedings."

• Jayden Parkinson

He added: "This is a desperately sad case where a teenage girl has lost her life.

"Our investigators have met with Jayden's family to explain our role and investigation.

"I know my condolences will be of little comfort to them as they continue to grieve over their loss."

On Tuesday, police revealed the 17-year-old's death had been caused by "pressure to the neck".

An initial post mortem, carried out on December 19, proved inconclusive.

Jayden's family has been informed.

Ben Blakeley, 22, from Reading, has been charged with murder.

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Keeping focus on domestic abuse

THAMES Valley Police has been taking part in a national campaign this week that has been highlighting how they deal with domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse: In Focus week started on Tuesday and is running until Saturday, and forces across the country have been explaining their role in protecting victims of abuse and highlighting the work of partner agencies.

It aims to encourage more people living with domestic abuse to come forward, with statistics saying one in four women and one in six men are affected by it at some point in their life.

By Adam Flinn
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

As part of the week, Thames Valley Police are hosting a 'Tweetathon' today.

The force will be posting about domestic abuse incidents on Twitter until 7pm this evening.

This will include reports of incidents being made to the control room, as well as the work being done by the force to support victims.

Det Insp Ivan Reaney said: "Domestic abuse is a major issue in our society, with more than one in four women and more than one in six men experiencing this type of abuse.

"Domestic abuse also has a significant impact on children who witness it in the family home.

"For a variety of reasons, many victims do not report domestic incidents. Thames Valley Police and our partners want to protect victims from abuse, and we would actively encourage victims to come forward to receive the support they need."

A new scheme is also being implemented nationally to allow the disclosure of information about an individual's history of domestic violence offending.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, also known as Clare's Law, gives a person the opportunity to find out whether their partner has a history of domestic violence.

It comes following the case of Clare Wood, who was murdered by her former partner in Greater Manchester in 2009.

If checks show that a person has a record of violent behaviour, or if there is believed to be a danger of domestic violence, police can act by sharing the information with the person they believe to be at risk. More information will be posted on Twitter, which you can follow on @ThamesVP during the week.

Mark's a champion after penning poem about pet dog

• *Mark Whittaker and Missie*

AN OXFORD man has won a national poetry competition for his sentimental about his pet dog Missie.

Mark Whittaker, from Southfield Park, penned his poem as part of a Valentine's Day contest staged by dog grooming product company Butch and Bess, and fought off competition from over 500 other entries.

Missie, a Staffordshire bull terrier jack-russell cross-breed, was bought by Mark as a puppy four years ago, and will now enjoy the first place prize of natural dog shampoos, grooming sprays and perfumes.

"I couldn't believe the news when my poem was selected as the winner, it was completely unexpected," said Mark.

"Writing my poem was actually pretty easy, I just wrote my genuine feelings about Missie down in words, which I think is why it works so well.

"Life just wouldn't be the same without her. She's my best friend and is always there come rain or shine."

Jo Amit, co-founder of Butch and Bess, said: "Mark's poem was outstanding and really resonated with the dog lovers we know.

"Just like us, people have been impressed with the way Mark has captured his connection to Missie in each and every line. Our congratulations go out to him."

Woman, 36, fights off muggers

A WOMAN fought off two men who tried to steal her mobile phone in Cornmarket Street last Friday.

At 5.45am on February 28, a 36-year-old woman was approached by the offenders.

They attempted to steal her mobile from her hand, but after a struggle the two men were unsuccessful and left. The two men walked away and one of them approached another man on a bicycle.

PC Paul Jones said: "There were people in the area at the time on their way to work so we are appealing for more information for anyone who may have witnessed the incident.

"Also we are keen to speak to the man on the bike that one of the offenders approached."

The first offender was a black man, with short black hair and was wearing a light chequered shirt. The second offender was also black and was wearing dark jeans, a black shiny bomber jacket and black trainers.

News Bites

Stay informed

OXFORDSHIRE County Council has launched a directory of information about adult social care services to support people and their loved ones in finding help and care.

The Oxfordshire Support Finder 2014 details services across the county, including advice about living at home and keeping people safe.

Cllr Judith Heathcoat said: "When choosing care people should be armed with the most up-to-date information to help them decide which kind of care is most suitable."

Great estate

OXFORD City Council's Great Estates project has launched its fourth parking scheme in the city, with 13 bays being allocated in Redmoor Close, Littlemore.

The scheme focuses on the improvement of parking spaces across Oxford, with five projects being approved for this financial year at a cost of £500,000.

Cllr Scott Seamons said: "We are committed to continue to deliver new parking spaces on our estates to solve long-standing parking problems and improve the external environment in these areas."

School choice

MORE than 90 per cent of children in Oxfordshire have been offered a place at their first preference school, after offers were sent out to parents on Monday.

Around 6,200 applications were made to the county council, with over 5,600 children getting into their chosen school.

This is a slight drop from the 92.7 per cent who got into their preferred school last year, when there were 5,870 applications made to the council.

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Andrew has close shave for charity

• Andrew Baker

DIDCOT based fundraising organisation Play2Give enjoyed one of its most successful nights to date at the end of last month.

An evening of entertaining and fundraising at the Marlborough Club on February 22 saw over £1,000 raised for the Oxford Children's Hospital and the John Radcliffe Paediatric Eye Fund.

Play2Give's founder Andrew Baker, 25, from Didcot, underwent life-saving brain surgery at the John Radcliffe Hospital when he was 12.

With the help of volunteers Dale Harris and Teresa Strike, Play2Give raised £4,812 last year and the organsiation is well on its way to at least matching that total this year.

He organised the fundraising event with Ross Downes, a research coordinator for the Eye Research Group Oxford.

"It was a great start to Play2Give's year," said Andrew.

"Hopefully the grand total for this year will be even higher than what we raised last year.

"To start the year off with the evening and to raise a lot of money is a good stepping stone."

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

A focal point of the evening was Andrew's head shave.

He explained: "Part of the reason behind the head shave was that last year I achieved my decade of fundraising support for the Children's Hospital.

"With the success of Play2Give over the last few years too, people like Ross and my fellow co-organiser Dale thought a head shave would be a great way for me to celebrate the achievements, as I still can't do anything sponsored in a physical way."

Andrew says he might keep the skinhead look, but as the head shave lured ever nearer on the night, he wasn't so keen.

"I had to physically march him out of the male toilets, where he had escaped to and was hiding, to the chair and sit him down," Mr Downes explained.

"He took some considerable convincing to get it cut as short as it is, insisting it had to be a bit longer.

"But in his defence he raised a lot of money for it and once started he came around to it and didn't try and escape again."

Mr Downes explained that the money raised would help towards the purchase of a RETCAM, which is used to photograph the retina of infants with a range of disorders, including Retinopathy of prematurity, shaken baby injury and cancer of the retina.

Andrew added: "Myself and Ross would like to say thank you to everyone who came along and supported the night.

"The response and turnout was great and the money that we raised for both charities was fantastic."

Play2Give's next big event is it's annual football tournament on July 13 at Oxford City FC.

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Do you have a Didcot story?

Contact Jack

jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

or on **01235 516932**

News Bites

Man arrested

A 19-YEAR-OLD man has been arrested for possession with intent to supply class A drugs after his house in Didcot was searched.

He was also arrested on suspicion of burglary as a bicycle that had been stolen was recovered during the search. The teenager has been bailed until April 7.

Tara, 12, wins youth election

A DIDCOT Girls pupil has been elected as the UK Youth Parliament member for South Oxfordshire.

Twelve-year-old Tara Paxton-Doggett will now attend regional and national meetings, debate in the House of Commons and work with other young people on a campaign for Oxfordshire.

Tara's campaign proposed that one per cent of business rates are put aside for the benefit of young people in the local communities where they are based.

Final stage

THE fourth and final phase of the transformation of Didcot Parkway got underway at the end of last week.

Trees on the grass bank at the front of the station have already been cut down ready for the existing road surface to be removed and excavated.

A pedestrian piazza and bus station is planned for the train station, with work expected to be completed by June 11.

Technology college plans set for unveiling

DESIGNS for the county's first University Technical College (UTC), proposed to open at Great Western Park, will be on show at the Civic Hall next week.

Activate Learning, previously Oxford and Cherwell Valley College Group, is the lead sponsor for the 600-place school.

The UTC will provide specialisms in physical science, life sciences and advanced engineering for 14 to 19-year-olds.

If the school gains approval and opens in September 2015, it would initially offer 140 places for students.

Lee Nicholls, executive director for curriculum standards and academies at Activate Learning, said: "If the Department for Education gives its final agreement then we will look to start building work in the summer with a view to all work being completed in time for opening in September 2015.

"In the meantime we look forward to hearing the views of local people on the potential design.

"The proposals from both building contractors provide a vibrant, innovative and stimulating learning environment which reflects the nature of the industries promoted within."

Designs will be on show between 5.30pm and 7.30pm on March 11.

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News Bites

Body found in search

A BODY, believed to be that of a man who went missing in January, was found in the River Thames at Shillingford on Friday.

Dr Richard Barnett was last seen at his home in Marsh Baldon in January, and police believe it is his body that was recovered by a specialist search and rescue team.

The death is not being treated as suspicious, and the matter has been handed over to the coroner.

Funding for health drives

HEALTHWATCH Oxfordshire has granted funding for two local health and social care projects, led by Sign Lingual UK and My Life My Choice.

Sign Lingual UK has been given a total of £3,550 to learn about the experiences of deaf people in Oxfordshire,

Meanwhile, My Life My Choice was awarded £5,590 to find out more about people with learning difficulties accessing GP services in the county.

Vivienne Laurie of Healthwatch said: "We have been very pleased with the range and diversity of projects that have applied to our fund."

Bike store gets back on business

A CYCLE shop destroyed by fire last Easter will re-open this Saturday, just under a year after the premises was left in ruins.

Cycle King on Cowley Road has undergone a £2million makeover to bring the shop back to its former glory after a fire tore through the three-storey building on March 31, 2013.

The family-run business, which has 27 stores across the country, have had a shop in Oxford for 30 years and have been on Cowley Road since 2002.

Cycle King lost around 1,600 bikes in the fire and set up a temporary shop on Cowley Road to keep the brand on the streets of Oxford.

Nicholas Thake, 32, retail operations director, said it was essential the shop was re-opened as soon as possible.

"The plan was to do it within a year," Mr Thake said.

"We knew it was a tough timescale and schedule but this is our flagship store so it was imperative that we did it as quick as possible.

"We have been here for 30 years so it was imperative that we had to stay on the Cowley Road.

"We managed to secure that store (the temporary shop) three or four weeks after the fire.

"I remember on the day of the fire trawling through the property papers to see what was out there.

"With it being 300 yards up the road that has helped us."

Mr Thake recalled being "shocked" at the news of the fire and renovating the store brought back memories of when Cycle King first moved to Cowley Road 12 years ago from Walton Street.

He added: "I took a phone call from the branch manager saying the shop was on fire.

"I didn't believe him until I saw it on the Internet. This is our flagship store and it was a big shock for us.

Mr Thake continued: "Twelve years ago it was a brand new shop, like it is now, and I was personally involved with that.

"It was hard to see all that hard work gone.

"We are very well established in the Cowley Road and we have had three or four people an hour trying to get in the shop.

"It was a full rebuild 12 years ago, it's brilliant to see it now, but I had flashbacks of that."

Cycle King re-opens on Saturday at 9am.

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

• *The fire's effects and (inset) Nicholas Thake, Cycle King's retail operations director after the refurbishment*

New school proposals

A CONSULTATION has been launched on plans for a new primary school in West Witney to serve the increasing population of the area.

Around 1,000 new homes are set to be built in the coming years, and the school will serve the expected rise in schoolchildren following the development's completion.

Oxfordshire County Council has started the consultation process to hear residents' views on the type of academy trust that should run the new school, and the educational services it should provide.

Cllr Melinda Tilley, cabinet member for children, education and families, said: "Academy trusts can be set up by a wide range of organisations, each with a particular focus or specialism.

"Existing academies can also apply to run new schools, so there is a wealth of possibilities to consider. We want to hear what local people have to say on the type of school they'd like to see in their area, so we can attract the right bids from potential sponsors."

The school buildings are expected to be ready by 2017, and will be able to admit 45 pupils per year into its reception class.

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So, Pas, as he is known dusted himself off and took a brave step to set up his own business and P Bruno Motor Repairs was born. He first began working from home, then progressed and moved in 2004 to In Between Towns Road, Cowley until 2006. The family run business is well known for being Oxfordshire's friendliest family owned garage. Even Pas's daughters have worked at the garage at one time or other, so it really has been a family affair.

The business went from strength to strength and eventually outgrew the Cowley premises, so then came the move to Bottom Yard, Oakfield Industrial Estate, Stanton Harcourt Road, Eynsham back in 2007 where the business remains to date.

Pas's goal is to achieve every customer's complete satisfaction and to maintain your vehicle economically and to the highest standards. The premises is within easy reach for Oxford, Witney, Abingdon and Woodstock areas and they also pride themselves on offering a local collection and delivery service.

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Flood defence investment in county is vital

A FORUM held in Oxford last week has sent out a clear message that investment in flood schemes is vital for the future.

Around 150 people attended the Members Flooding Forum at King's Centre, Osney Mead, which was organised by the county council last Saturday.

It was held in response to the wettest January since records began in 1767.

Representatives from parishes and community resilience groups attended the forum, as well as the Environment Agency, Thames Water and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The forum heard that nearly a third of parish councils have community emergency plans in place or are developing them.

Meanwhile, the county council is encouraging 317 parishes in the county to follow their lead.

County Councillor Rodney Rose, lead member for flooding, was pleased with the turnout.

"I would urge any parish at risk of flooding to develop an emergency plan, and the county council is willing and able to give them the support they need," said Cllr Rose.

"However, there is only so much local communities can do and Oxfordshire needs major investment to improve its flood defences and prevent the impact we have seen on homes and businesses this year. That's why Oxfordshire needs local and nationals investment in major flood schemes for the future."

Last month, local MPs Nicola Blackwood and Andrew Smith, along with Cllr Rose and city council leader Bob Price, visited Downing Street to call on the government to back a Western Conveyance Channel.

This would see water diverted around the city, assisting in the prevention of flooding.

Throughout January and February this year, 168 homes were flooded across three events with the fire service responding to 150 flood-related incidents.

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

• Cllr Rodney Rose visited the flooded Bablockhythe Holiday Park, near Farmoor, in January

Barry Russell, operations manager for Environment Agency's west Thames area, added: "The Environment Agency believes there is a strong business case for the Western Conveyance that would take water round Oxford and improve the city's flood defences.

"The important thing is that all the local partners come together to back the proposal at the flooding summit and show that they are willing and able to make a financial contribution.

"That means Oxfordshire councils, business and local communities showing government that they can bridge the funding gap for such a big scheme."

University professor honoured for research into animal behaviour

AN OXFORD University professor was one of the winners of the new Sir Patrick Moore Award, presented by the RSPCA.

Professor Marian Dawkins, who heads the Animal Behaviour Research Group at the university, was honoured for her study into how good animal welfare can benefit humans.

"My work involves research on animal welfare and working with farmers towards high welfare farming that enables farmers to make a living," said Professor Dawkins.

"For me, winning this award means that animal welfare is now accepted as a scientific discipline."

Dr James Yeates, the RSPCA's chief veterinary officer, said: "Marian has a long standing relationship with the RSPCA, which started in the 1970s when it funded new research into living environments of animals.

"This form of research is now standard practice within welfare research and something that helps inform development of the RSPCA's welfare standards across many species."

Channel 5 newsreader Emma Crosby presented the awards, and she said: "Professor Dawkin's research has helped provide evidence to persuade people that animals have feelings which need to be respected.

"This new award highlights the high value placed by the RSPCA on developments in and application of animal welfare research science."

News Bites

Court date

A 23-YEAR-OLD man has been charged in connection with a robbery at the Ladbrokes bookmakers in Iffley Road, Oxford, that took place last month.

The man, from Carterton, was arrested on Friday and charged the following day.

He was remanded in custody and appeared at Oxford Magistrates' Court on Monday.

Dancing show

THE former home of the Museum of Oxford will showcase a Dancin' Oxford event this week.

Paulette Mae will perform her solo show, 'sea me', today and tomorrow with doors opening at 7.30pm and tickets costing £3.

The new venue for dance and theatre events is part of a three year programme supporting the fundraising for the conversion of the old Museum space.

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Graven Hill purchase is approved

By Adam Flinn
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

CHERWELL District Council has approved the purchase of Bicester's Graven Hill site, the first stage in the process for the UK's first self-build community of up to 1,900 homes.

The decision was made by councillors on Monday to buy the 187 hectare site, currently owned by the Ministry of Defence.

As well as the homes, the land will also see the creation of one million square feet of commercial space, expected to bring 2,000 new jobs and apprenticeships to the town.

Cllr Barry Wood, leader of the council, said: "The decision to approve the purchase of Graven Hill will be of historical significance to this council.

"It represents the ability to control a strategic piece of land which will expedite the delivery of housing.

"It also signifies the first stage in delivering the country's first self-build community, which will benefit thousands of families for decades to come.

"This is the first ever large scale project of its kind in the UK, trailblazing a new way of customising homes and empowering communities.

"For many, the fantasy of building a dream home can now become a reality and we are looking forward to leading this pioneering development."

During Monday's meeting, councillors discussed the benefits of buying the Graven Hill site, which included ensuring that it was not left undeveloped.

A resolution to grant planning consent has already been given for the new homes, in conjunction with a primary school, pub/restaurant and a small number of local shops.

The self-build concept will see kit homes available to buy from catalogues, as well as custom build projects where the owner designs the property but employs contractors to build it.

The project at Graven Hill would adhere to the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision, to use the aspirations of the future eco-town to promote sustainable development in the area.

For more information about the project or to register an interest, contact Helen Town on 01295 221615 or go to www.gravenhill.org.uk.

HENRY makes a huge impact with children

AN OXFORD-based charity has been named as one of this year's winners of a GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Impact award, earning £30,000 of funding in the process.

HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young) is a charity that establishes healthy eating in children from a young age, and was one of 10 winners to receive the funding.

Since 2006, HENRY has worked with thousands of families and healthcare professionals across the UK to tackle childhood obesity, and offers support to parents and their young children.

Kim Roberts, chief executive of HENRY, said: "We are delighted that the importance of our work and the strengths of the HENRY approach have been recognised by the judging panel.

"HENRY is all about giving babies and young children the best possible start in life, and we are excited about the opportunities the award will give us to reach even more children and their families."

The GSK IMPACT awards are run in partnership with independent healthcare organisation The King's Fund, and are now in their 17th year.

Lisa Weaks, third sector programme manager at The King's Fund, said: "HENRY is an impressive organisation that has achieved a lot in a relatively short period of time.

"It's given parents, along with health and early learning professionals, the tools to tackle obesity."

• *Kim Roberts, chief executive of HENRY and (inset) Lisa Weaks, third sector programme manager at the King's Fund*

MP's Corner

Ed Vaizey
MP for Wantage and Didcot

Keeping the heritage alive

WITH the forthcoming centenary of the UK entering the First World War, I hope that local groups will consider applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for community projects to learn more about the First World War.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is making at least £1million a year available until 2019 as part of the First World War: then and now programme for small, community grants. It will provide grants of £3,000 to £10,000 enabling groups right across the UK to explore, conserve and share their First World War heritage and deepen their understanding of the impact of the conflict which helped to shape our modern world.

I'm delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund is making this money available to communities. Like many areas across the UK, the impact of the First World War on the people of the Didcot and Wantage Constituency was extensive. There are 42 cemeteries and churchyards in the constituency which have graves of soldiers who died in the First World War, and every community of any size has a war memorial set up in the aftermath of the War to recall those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

A similar programme, Home Front Recall, made grants to three small projects in my constituency in 2005, while there have been more than 50 grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund in total over recent years. Twenty-four of those grants were for less than £10,000, so there are clearly many good ideas out there which can benefit from this sort of funding.

For those who want to find out more about the legacy of the First World War or who wish to mark the Centenary, I would strongly urge them to get in touch with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

You can look them up at www.hlf.org.uk or call them on their Grant enquiry line, 020 7591 6042/44 or email enquire@hlf.org.uk.

The Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War is an occasion for careful thought and recollection, and I very much hope that grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund will assist in both of those locally.

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Surgery better for prostate cancer

AN OXFORD University research study has revealed that surgery could be the better option for men with localised prostate cancer.

Led by Prasanna Sooriakumaran, from Oxford University's Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences, the study found that surgery, as the first-line treatment, offered greater benefits for younger men in good general health.

Experts are hoping the findings, published last week in the British Medical Journal, could help inform treatment choice when it comes to deciding between surgery or radiotherapy.

Surgical treatment involves removing the prostate gland using robotic keyhole surgery while radiotherapy gives a high dose of radiation to the prostate gland.

The research team from the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands compared data on what happened to more than 34,000 Swedish men over a 15-year period after they had been treated for prostate cancer.

Results demonstrated that men who had had surgery had better survival rates than those that had undergone radiotherapy.

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Mr Sooriakumaran explained: "The study found that patients in what we would class as an intermediate or high-risk group who had surgery as their primary treatment had an increased survival rate. Benefits for surgery were also seen in low-risk prostate cancer patients but these men tended to do well whatever treatment they received.

"Further, the greatest benefits for surgery over radiotherapy were seen in younger men and those in better general health as these men were less likely to succumb to death from other causes and thus their prostate cancer became a life-threatening issue for them."

He added: "We hope this study will play an important part in informing the decision-making process of the individual patient and his doctor regarding what treatment is best for him.

"It is important that the results of this study are placed in the context of that overall discussion as to the most appropriate treatment for any given individual sufferer."

Partying hard for charity

• *(From left) Christine Barnes, Tracey Richardson of David Wilson Homes, and Penny Hambridge*

A PARTY held by residents of a village near Bicester have raised £250 for Oxford Children's Hospital's Fund for Children charity.

Money collected at the 'Get to know your neighbours' party in Chesterton, as well as a donation from housebuilders David Wilson Homes, will be put towards medical equipment at the hospital.

Penny Hambridge, of Fund for Children, said: "We are very grateful to David Wilson Homes for the support they have shown to Oxford Children's Hospital, it is so appreciated.

"Charitable donations enable us to provide equipment and facilities beyond what the NHS alone can fund."

Christine Barnes from Chesterton said: "We held the party and had a raffle, with all proceeds going to the hospital.

"The party was a great success and with a donation from David Wilson Homes too, we raised £250."

Steve Barton, senior sales manager for David Wilson Homes, added: "We were approached by residents who were keen for us to help them with raising a sum of money for the Fund for Children charity."

MP's Corner

John Howell
MP for Henley

Celebrating humble origins

I WAS struck by an article in The Times on the cost of becoming an MP. The lines which resonated with me were: "If there were a few more Tories of humble origin perhaps there would be a greater readiness to worry about people on average earnings." The fact is that there are lots of us in the Conservative Party from humble origins and it is why we have concentrated our efforts on ensuring that everyone is looked after.

I was brought up in the suburbs of South London. My late father was for much of his time a cable jointer with the LEB before going to work at Heathrow Airport looking after disabled arrivals. We knew the hard choices that have to be made. I find now that in mid career, all I have is the result of my own efforts; I inherited nothing. I got on in life as a result of Conservative educational policies and hard work. The party I joined was one of aspiration and opportunity and I want to see those spread widely.

I appreciate it is a difficult time for many people at the moment with household budgets being stretched. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that Britain's economic plan is working thanks to all of our sacrifice and endeavour. I am reassured that where the Government can afford to do so, they will continue to help hard working families. Take for example the personal tax allowance threshold. This is being raised to £10,000 from April 2014. This will halve the income tax bill of those working full time on minimum wage, cut income tax for 25 million taxpayers and see 2.7million of the lowest paid taken out of tax altogether. Part of our long-term economic plan is about creating jobs, cutting taxes and making work pay so that living standards rise in a sustainable way. The Low Pay Commission, which advises the Government on minimum wage rates, has recommended a three per cent increase in the minimum wage from this October. As the economy improves we should be able to afford faster increases in the minimum wage so in time its real value can be restored and I would welcome an increase.

There is no shame in being a working class Conservative; quite the opposite. It is a party which crosses all such boundaries and believes passionately in spreading the aspiration and opportunity which first drew me to it.

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'Boris Bikes' set to return to city

OXFORD'S answer to London's Boris Bikes is set to return to the city in April.

Surrey-based HourBike has signed a contract with Oxfordshire County Council to run the OxonBike scheme.

The county council has been looking for a new operator since November last year.

Previous operator Grand Scheme Bike Share Ltd went into liquidation after the scheme was launched last summer.

When it is relaunched next month, OxonBike will go back to operating in the Headington area.

By **Jack Johnson**
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Cllr David Nimmo Smith, cabinet member for transport, said: "I am delighted to hear that HourBike will be getting the bikes back on the road in time for the summer.

"More than 500 people signed up to OxonBike last year and we are certain that they will get back in the saddle from April.

"Commuters who use Thornhill park and ride and who travel in and around Headington to places like the university and hospital are certain to be pleased to hear OxonBike will return."

Hire charges for the bikes will remain the same with the first half an hour free of charge.

OxonBike was launched in July last year with a 30-bike pilot project, linking Thornhill Park and Ride with major employers in the area.

The bikes were initially located at Thornhill Park and Ride, the John Radcliffe Hospital, London Road, Oxford Brookes Gypsy Lane site, University of Oxford Old Road campus, the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre and the Churchill Hospital.

Fully funded by the Government via the Local Sustainable Transport fund, the £150,000 scheme is set to continue until March 2015.

Tim Caswell, CEO of HourBike, said: "I am delighted that we have been given the opportunity to get involved in Oxford and help give commuters in the Headington area another way to get around.

"April will be an exciting time as we relaunch the scheme and look forward to welcoming back OxonBike users old and new."

• *Cllr David Nimmo Smith at the OxonBike launch event last summer (Picture by Jack Johnson)*

News Bites

Drugs offence

A 46-YEAR-OLD man from Wallingford has been bailed until May 6 after being arrested for drugs offences.

At 7pm on February 14, he was arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to supply both class A and class B drugs.

Thames Valley Police is currently carrying out an analysis of the substances seized.

Man arrested after Bicester axe robbery

A 22-YEAR-OLD man from Carterton is currently in police custody in connection with a robbery to a betting shop in Bicester on February 27.

Shortly after 8.30pm, a man entered the Coral Racing shop in Wesley Lane carrying a small axe, and demanded money.

A member of staff handed the offender a quantity of cash.

The man is white, of medium build, had his face covered with a red scarf and was wearing a dark grey hooded top.

Thames Valley Police is currently investigating the incident and exploring whether it is linked to other robberies of commercial premises in the county.

Det Insp John Turner said: "I am appealing for anyone with any information about the incident or anyone who saw anyone acting suspiciously in the area at the time to contact police.

"We have launched an investigation and we arrested a man in connection with the incident shortly afterwards."

If you have any information call 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Find us on Twitter @OxfordGuardian

MEP backs proposed e-cig rule changes

SOUTH East MEP Catherine Bearder has backed new European Union rules that will see electronic cigarettes sold as freely as tobacco.

The EU has overruled the government's proposals to classify e-cigs as medicines, insisting they should be regarded as a consumer product if they contain 20mg/l or less of nicotine.

E-cig manufacturers will have to ensure refillable nicotine fluid containers are childproof and that spillage can be prevented.

Ms Bearder understands that the decision will not be popular with everyone.

"This is a compromise that won't please everyone, but it's a huge improvement on the alternative of an e-cig ban that was threatened in some countries," she said.

"We don't yet know the long term consequences of using e-cigs, but it must be likely that they will be healthier than the tobacco that we know is so damaging."

MEP's also agreed new rules for health warnings to now take up 65 per cent of a cigarette package.

Ms Bearder added: "Everyone knows that smoking is bad for you, so even if it only stops a few more people smoking that will mean a healthier life for them and those around them."

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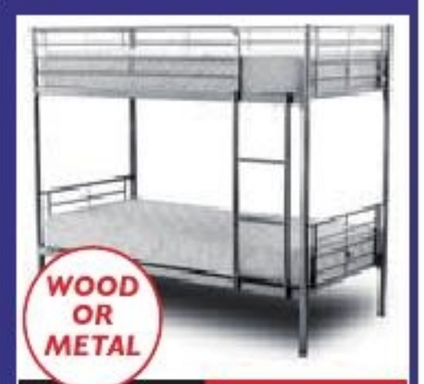

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Warning over scam that cost pensioner £3,000

POLICE are urging residents to be vigilant against courier fraud, after a 70-year-old man was duped into giving away his bank card and pin number.

Last Tuesday, the man received a phone call enquiring whether he had conducted any transactions in London, and was asked to call the number on the back of his card.

He was then transferred to someone claiming to be from the Metropolitan Police Fraud Investigation Unit, who obtained the victim's card details and pin number.

He was then told to put his card in an envelope to be handed over to a courier, as he believed it was needed urgently by the forensic team.

Investigating Officer DC Darren Little, at St Aldate's police station, said: "I would like to speak to anyone who may have any information about the incident to contact the police.

"If you have also been a victim and not reported it yet, or had someone attempt the same or similar scam on you, then also get in touch.

"In this case the victim had £3,000 stolen from his bank account, so it is vital people

By Adam Flinn
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

make themselves aware of the scam and how to prevent themselves becoming a victim.

"I would like to advise that if you receive a suspicious call of this nature requesting that you contact a third party, then use a different phone to ensure the line is clear and the fraudsters aren't keeping the line open."

Courier fraud relates to when a fraudster calls the victim on their landline, and attempts to divulge personal information including pin numbers.

Some of the most common scams include someone claiming to be police, that the victim's bank card had developed a fault and needs replacing, or assistance is required in catching a corrupt bank employee.

The fraudster will then arrange for an innocent courier to collect the bank card and deliver it to a prearranged location. It can be used to withdraw cash.

Police are reminding people that they and banks will never ask for bank cards and pin numbers, and to end such calls immediately.

Child sex offender gets eight-year sentence

A 45-YEAR-OLD man from Aylesbury has been sentenced to eight years in prison after sexually abusing a child in Bicester over a 12-year period.

Adam Reeves of Sharpes Close, Waddesdon, Aylesbury, pleaded guilty to three counts of indecent assault, for which he received two years' imprisonment for each offence, to run concurrently.

He also pleaded guilty to a further count of indecent assault, for which he received four years' imprisonment, to run consecutively.

Reeves pleaded guilty to two counts of indecency with a child for which he received two years' imprisonment for each count, to run concurrent to each other, but consecutive to the other sentences.

He also pleaded guilty to another sexual offence for which he received one year in prison, to run concurrently with the previous sentence.

The offences date from 1996 to 2008 and took place at an address in Bicester.

• *Adam Reeves*

Investigating officer Det Con Natalie Thompson said: "I would like to commend the victim for her courage and bravery in coming forward and her continued support during the lengthy investigation, which was an extremely difficult time for her.

"This conviction demonstrates that Thames Valley Police take all allegations of sexual offences extremely seriously. I hope this investigation will encourage other victims of sexual abuse to contact the force."

News Bites

Car stolen

A CAR, electrical items and jewellery have been stolen in a burglary in Garsington.

At 9pm on February 22, an offender gained entry to a property on Kiln Lane, before stealing a silver Chrysler Town and Country People Carrier.

The offender, a white man of slim build, was seen driving the vehicle at speed out of Kiln Lane and the car is thought to have a flat tyre.

If you have any information call 101.

Two charged

A 27-YEAR-OLD man from Blackbird Leys has been charged with a number of offences relating to aggravated burglary, robbery, attempted robbery and possession of a blade.

The man, from Shepherds Hill, was charged along with a 34-year-old man of no fixed abode for the burglary of properties in Garsington and Chiselhampton Hill.

He was also charged separately for the other offences, which relate to incidents in Barns Road, Cowley, on February 10, and Ashhurst Way, Rose Hill, on February 23.

Both men appeared at Banbury Magistrates' Court last week, and were remanded to appear at Oxford Crown Court tomorrow.

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www.utcoxfordshire.org.uk

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Superfast broadband coming to Northmoor

STRUGGLING to access the internet looks to be a thing of the past for Northmoor residents with superfast broadband set to be installed in the village.

And it has been achieved thanks to a successful project driven by the local community with the support of West Oxfordshire District Council.

Following two years of work and a successful bid for government funding, residents can now look forward to superfast broadband across the parish, provided by Gigaclear.

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

The work will be funded by a grant from the government's Rural Community Broadband Fund (RCBF), which was awarded to the Northmoor Community Project. Additional match funding will come from the network operator.

Graham Shelton, chairman of Northmoor Parish Council and leader of the Community Broadband Project, said: "This has been a massive community effort, and we are very grateful for the perseverance of all those involved.

"This project will bring our parish into the 21st century and everyone will benefit from it, including the farmers and all the other people who work or run businesses from home. It is fantastic news."

Simon Harrison, a member of the Community Broadband Project team, explained: "The community project was inspired by the realisation that everyone in the country was talking about the importance of superfast Next Generation Access.

Yet in our community, we still had many people with no broadband service at all.

"We were absolutely determined that this time no-one will be left behind.

"We are therefore delighted that Gigaclear's network will deliver exactly the same first-class performance to every single property.

"The Government grant means that this can be done at an affordable price for residents despite the difficult geography of the parish."

Gigaclear, chosen as the provider by WODC, is scheduled to start work this year on building and operating the new fibre network.

It will provide coverage to all 521 properties in Northmoor, Moreton and Bablockhythe, including residences in the local mobile home park.

Cllr Richard Langridge, cabinet member for Communities at WODC, said: "We are acutely aware of the importance of fast, reliable broadband, and the difficulties faced by communities in our rural district in gaining access to this.

"The local community broadband project group in Northmoor parish has done a sterling job in bringing this project forward, and the council is delighted to have supported them in securing a service operator to make this scheme a reality.

"It will make a huge difference to those living and working there."

• *(Left to right) Sue Harrison, James Harrison, Graham Shelton, Cllr Richard Langridge, Graeme Ogilvie and Peter Winder.*

News Bites

Driver jailed

A BICESTER man has been sentenced to 36 weeks in jail after being convicted of death by dangerous driving.

Daniel Fallaw, 36, of Peregrine Way, was sentenced at Oxford Crown Court last Thursday after he caused the death of 48-year-old David Parris in Neunkirchen Way, Bicester, in December 2012.

Mr Parris sustained fatal head injuries when he came off his bicycle after Fallaw, driving a silver Ford Escort, collided with him.

Fallaw was also banned from driving for two years, and ordered to take an extended driving test at the end of this period.

Investigating officer PC Sian Pringle said: "Although justice has now been served, this collision resulted in Mr Parris tragically losing his life, a life that cannot be replaced."

Bad bouncers

AN OXFORDSHIRE-based security director was fined £500 and ordered to pay £2,400 in costs after he pleaded guilty to supplying three unlicensed door supervisors.

Colin Wright, owner of security firm Coresecure, supplied the door supervisors to venues in Witney town centre, and were discovered as part of an operation by Thames Valley Police.

Security Industry Authority head of investigation Nathan Salmon said: "Our action in this matter was with the purpose of clearing out poor practice within the industry."

Funding efforts for Blue Cross to help with 'crucial' supplies

BURFORD-BASED animal charity Blue Cross have received a donation of almost £9,000, raised by customers at national retailer Pets at Home.

A total of £8,845 was handed over to the charity by the shop's Very Important Pets (VIP) club members, who earn points through purchases that can be converted into funding for an animal charity of their choice.

It was part of nearly £700,000 that was donated to 533 national and local charities across the UK.

Vik Philpott, store manager at Pets at Home Oxford, said: "Just last year our customers have raised nearly £9,000 for Blue Cross, meaning we can help them with crucial food and vet costs in the future."

Gavin Hawthorn, head of the VIP club, said: "The amount we've been able to donate to charities such as Blue Cross is simply incredible.

"By giving customers the opportunity to support a national or local charity and directly help vulnerable animals in Oxfordshire, we've seen an overwhelming response, so thank you to our VIP club members."

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The life and times of Ruthie Henshall

• *Ruthie Henshall brings her personal show to Didcot's Cornerstone Theatre.* *See page 20 for the full story.*

Want even more?
Visit OxfordshireGuardian.co.uk
for the full guide of what to see and do in Oxfordshire

Scientists set for Oxford appearance

AMERICAN band 'We are Scientists' are embarking on a UK tour this month, performing at the O2 Academy in Oxford this evening.

The New Yorkers will soon be releasing a five-track EP entitled 'Business Casual' after the success of their debut album 'With Love and Squalor' in 2005.

Doors open at 7pm and tickets cost £15.

Relationships through dance

BODY Politic will present an evening of inclusive dance at the Pegasus Theatre on Monday evening (7.30pm).

Javier de Frutos' Two for C will depict a couple trapped in a stagnant relationship.

Meanwhile, Oxford based charity the Parasol project will perform alongside Candoco for the curtain raiser.

Tickets cost £10, and to book your place, call 01865 812150.

Ruthie gets intimate in show about her life

SINGER, dancer and actress Ruthie Henshall gives a personal account of her life and career in her latest tour, coming to Didcot's Cornerstone theatre on Saturday.

Ruthie has been performing since the late 1980s, appearing in numerous musicals that have included 'Les Miserables', 'Chicago' and her personal favourite 'Crazy For You'.

Last year she released her new album 'I've Loved These Days', singing a broad range of genres that will also feature in Saturday's show.

"I take a walk through my life and career with songs that lyrically mean something to me, along with stories from backstage and people I've met and worked with," said Ruthie.

"It's a real close look at the business as well, and things that the audience don't normally get to hear about. A lot of fun!"

Joining Ruthie on tour is her band, made up of musical director Paul Schofield on piano, Lewis Andrews on guitar and bass, and Stephen Maclachlan on drums.

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

They will perform a mix of songs during the show, and Ruthie said the reaction from audiences to her album had been "really good".

But it was through dancing that Ruthie's showbusiness career began, as she began ballet as a child.

She said: "I was doing ballet for the longest time, and that's how I started.

"I really fell in love with dancing, and then started to find my voice about the age of 11.

"I fell in love with all the MGM musicals and that's really what guided me the way I wanted to go, and I just loved all that they were, the stories and fantasies that you can take people into."

An Intimate Evening with Ruthie Henshall starts at 8pm. For booking details, go to www.cornerstone-arts.org or call 01235 515144.

• ***Ruthie Henshall tells the story of her career at Didcot Cornerstone on Saturday***

Kiss Me Figaro

THE Wallingford Corn Exchange is host to a tale of romance this Saturday.

'Kiss Me Figaro' tells the story of a handsome tenor who wants to win back a soprano diva after ditching her at the altar.

Featuring classic numbers by Puccini, Mozart and Brahms, 'Kiss Me Figaro' is said to offer an evening of love, laughter and amazing music.

For tickets call 01491 825000.

Tony Stockwell

TV psychic Tony Stockwell will be demonstrating that those who have passed on can still communicate with their loved ones when he visits the Mill Arts Centre on Monday.

Tony is well known for appearing on Street Psychic, Psychic Private Eyes and Psychic Academy.

His evening of mediumship starts at 7.30pm and tickets are £18.50.

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Dance show to get under people's skin

SUBATHRA Subramaniam captures the unspoken practices of the operating theatre as 'Under My Skin' comes to the North Wall Arts Centre this Saturday.

Through the medium of dance, the audience will be invited to share a rare insight into the world of surgery.

'Under My Skin' is the third work from Sadhana Dance and features third year undergraduates from Buckinghamshire New University.

Tickets cost £13 and the show starts at 8pm.

Capturing the imagination

BAWREN Tavaziva is celebrating ten years of unique dance making with a special performance at the Pegasus Theatre tomorrow and on Saturday (8pm).

'Tavaziva Ten' will see dancers perform 10 short pieces depicting the extraordinary story of one man's imagination.

Tickets cost £12, and to book a seat, call 01865 812150.

Handling the pressure

LEGENDARY ska group The Selecter come to Oxford's O2 Academy on Sunday, as they celebrate the 35th anniversary of their debut album 'Too Much Pressure'.

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

To honour the milestone, lead singer Pauline Black and the band will be performing the album in its entirety, as well as a mix of other favourites from their extensive back catalogue.

The group reformed in 2010, and have recorded the two albums 'Made in Britain' and 'String Theory' since then.

Pauline said: "We'll do the 'Too Much Pressure' album in its entirety, and then an extended encore of material from our second album 'Celebrate the Bullet' and the two new albums.

"The Selecter likes to do everything in reverse, so when we got back together in 2010 instead of doing 'Too Much Pressure', we put out two new albums instead.

"But we thought 'we've had our 35th year, maybe let's look back now rather than forward', and it just seemed like a really good opportunity to go back and revisit the debut album."

And the band are already planning new material to come out in 2015.

"It's always exciting," Pauline added. "I love albums coming together and we've got a year now to really think about it and get to grips with the material. We had a really great reaction with 'String Theory'. I think people actually respect the band for putting out new music. We did 80 shows last year, and I don't think that would have happened unless we'd made ourselves credible, and a band that was more than just one album, as it were."

Call 0844 477 2000 or go to www.o2academyoxford.co.uk.

• ***Pauline Black and The Selecter come to Oxford on Sunday evening***

Talawa in town

TALAWA Theatre Company and The National Theatre bring 'Moon on a Rainbow Shawl' to the Oxford Playhouse throughout next week.

Errol John's play, set in the Port of Spain, tells the story of Ephraim, who wants to escape his dead-end job for a fresh start in England.

Shows run from March 11 to 15 with tickets ranging from £11 to £24.

For more information and show times, visit www.oxfordplayhouse.com.

Seven brides

OXFORD'S New Theatre stages the critically acclaimed 'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers' next week (March 10-15).

It tells the story of Adam, who goes to town to get a wife. She discovers her new fiancé lives with his six brothers who all want wives of their own.

Adam, therefore, develops an inspired solution - kidnap the women they want!

Tickets range from £12.90 to £38.90. Visit www.newtheatreoxford.org.uk or call 0844 871 3020 for more information.

1 March - 24 March, 10am - 4pm
The Sewell Centre Gallery, Radley College, Abingdon
OXFORD ART SOCIETY SPRING MEMBERS EXHIBITION
An exciting view of contemporary work by Oxfordshire Artists in many styles and mediums and showing the creativity of it's members.

5 March - 8 March
The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury
GOD OF CARNAGE
The play is a sharp account of two couples tiptoeing around their mutual dislike. Described as a comedy of manners without the manners.
01295 279002 www.themillartscentre.co.uk

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Yes, every week you can be in with a chance of winning a pair of tickets to the film of your choice and it couldn't be easier to enter. All you have to do go to **oxfordshireguardian.co.uk/competitions** and click on the Cineworld Competition before 12am next Wednesday.

Your name will be entered into the draw and if you win you will be contacted to tell you how to collect your tickets.

You don't have to use the tickets immediately as they are valid for up to one year, so you can wait for the film you REALLY want to see!

cineworld CINEMAS

5 March - 8 March
Oxford Playhouse
THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE
University of Oxford student company Screw the Looking Glass, whose previous production Another Country was a Playhouse hit.
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

5 - 8 March, 7:45pm - 9:45pm
The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury
BANBURY CROSS PLAYERS PRESENT YAZMINA REZA'S GOD OF CARNAGE (TRANSLATED BY CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON)
A playground altercation between two young boys brings their parents together in an attempt to resolve the matter. The evening progresses. The alcohol flows. Tensions emerge and finally the gloves come off in this brutally entertaining, 2009 Tony Award winning play. This play contains strong language TICKETS £8 / £9
01295 279002 / www.themillartscentre.co.uk

5 March - 16 March
various locations around Oxford
OXFORD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FESTIVAL
Around 30 exciting events are happening across 10 days in various locations around Oxford and the wider county. A very special line-up of activities is taking place to mark this milestone year, with the theme of 'Changes for Women, Women Making Changes'.
www.oxfordinternationalwomensfestival.co.uk

7 March
at Didcot Football Club
CLUB RIO THE VENUE FOR OVER 30'S
entry £5
07789428795 www.rio-limo.co.uk

7 March, 8pm - 9:30pm
Merton College Chapel, Oxford
HOW DESOLATE LIES THE CITY - HILARY TERM CONCERT
A concert of Lenten choral music by Brahms, Bach, Mauersberger and Verdi, concluding with Pizzetti's Requiem.
schola.ticketsource.co.uk/

8 March, 8pm - 10pm
Jacqueline du Pré Music Building
FITZWILLIAM QUARTET
A wonderfully rich programme from the renowned Fitzwilliam Quartet.
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660

9 March, 3pm
Henley Town Hall
ALLEN DIGITAL THEATRE ORGAN - ROBERT WOLFE
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www.henleyorgantrust.org.uk

9 March, 1pm - 3pm
St Gregory the Great School, Cricket Road, Oxford OX4 3DR
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9 March, 7:30pm
Holywell Music Room
MARGARITA AND THE HOUSE OF LOVE
This is the last chance in Oxford to see this brilliant, witty, passionate, dark and light tale of an old house in Seville, and those who have lived there. Fabulous music-making, innovative approach to the music of Granados, Lorca, de Falla, Rodrigo and much more. Stunning music and lustrous storytelling. Script from writer Nicola Harrison, starring the amazing Oxford-based ensemble Casa Margarita (Guy Newbury, Keith Fairbairn, Gerald Garcia, Olivier Bonnici, Oliver Westlake (narrator)) and the dramatic and yearning voice of mezzo-soprano Margarita!
www.casa-margarita.co.uk/

9 March
O2 Academy Oxford
THE SELECTER
0844 477 2000

10 March, 8pm - 11pm
The Haven Club @ the Art Bar, Oxford
DAVE ARCARI LIVE CONCERT
SCOTTISH troubadour DAVE ARCARI plays show at The Haven Club (at the Art Bar – previously the Bullingdon Arms), Cowley Road, Oxford on Monday 10 March as part of a 14-date UK tour to promote his latest album Whisky in my Blood. Arcari whose 2013 debut US tour was a resounding success (and sees him return to the States later this year) – and has just returned from a series of dates in Finland which got 2014 off to a good start.
01360 970248 / www.davearcari.com

11 March - 15 March
Oxford Playhouse
MOON ON A RAINBOW SHAWL
Talawa Theatre Company and the National Theatre bring Errol John's seminal play to Oxford, following a critically acclaimed London run.
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

13 March, 8pm
The North Wall, Oxford
THE ADVENTURES OF ALVIN SPUTNIK: DEEP SEA EXPLORER
Seas have risen, billions have died. Alvin Sputnik must venture to the bottom of the ocean to save humanity. Direct from sell-out seasons in New York, Sydney, and Auckland, this piece uses projection, puppetry and live music to tell a micro-epic about enduring love and the end of the world.
www.thenorthwall.com/01865 319450

13 March, 7:45pm
Sparsholt, Near Wantage
'BOOKS AT THE BARN'
with Ed Stourton
www.wantagebetjeman.com/books-at-the-barn

15 March, 8pm - 11:45pm
The Art Bar
JOHN BRAMWELL SOLO TOUR
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johnbramwell.com

15 March, 4:55pm
Vue Bicester, Cineworld Didcot, The Regal Henley-on-Thames, Phoenix Picturehouse Oxford, Cineworld Witney
THE MET: LIVE IN HD MASSENET: WERTHER
The cast is led by Jonas Kaufmann, singing the title role of the brooding poet opposite Sophie Koch, his unattainable love, Charlotte.
Metopera.org/uk

16 March, 2:30pm - 5:15pm
Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford OX1 3SA
ANOTHER AFTERNOON OF GRAND OPERA
Kennington and District United Church Choirs will perform. Admittance free, with collection for Thames Valley and Chiltern Airambulance.
01865 735885/www.kenningtonchoir.org.uk

18 March - 22 March
A Streetcar Named Desire
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' ICONIC, PULITZER-PRIZE WINNING PLAY IS BROUGHT TO THE PLAYHOUSE STAGE BY OXFORD THEATRE GUILD.
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

19 March - 20 March
Burton Taylor Studio
THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND THE TALL
Set in the Malayan jungle in1942, a British patrol finds itself holed up in an abandoned miner's hut. Into this volatile mix is suddenly thrust a naïve Japanese prisoner, whose silent, vulnerable presence forces the men to decide what it is they are really fighting for.
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

21 March
Burton Taylor Studio
NINETIES WOMAN
Rosie Wilby traces a personal journey through early 90s feminism to find the collective of women who set up Matrix, York University's feminist newspaper. Nineties Woman is an inventive joy of a performance featuring live interactive storytelling interspersed with video interviews, music and photo archive.
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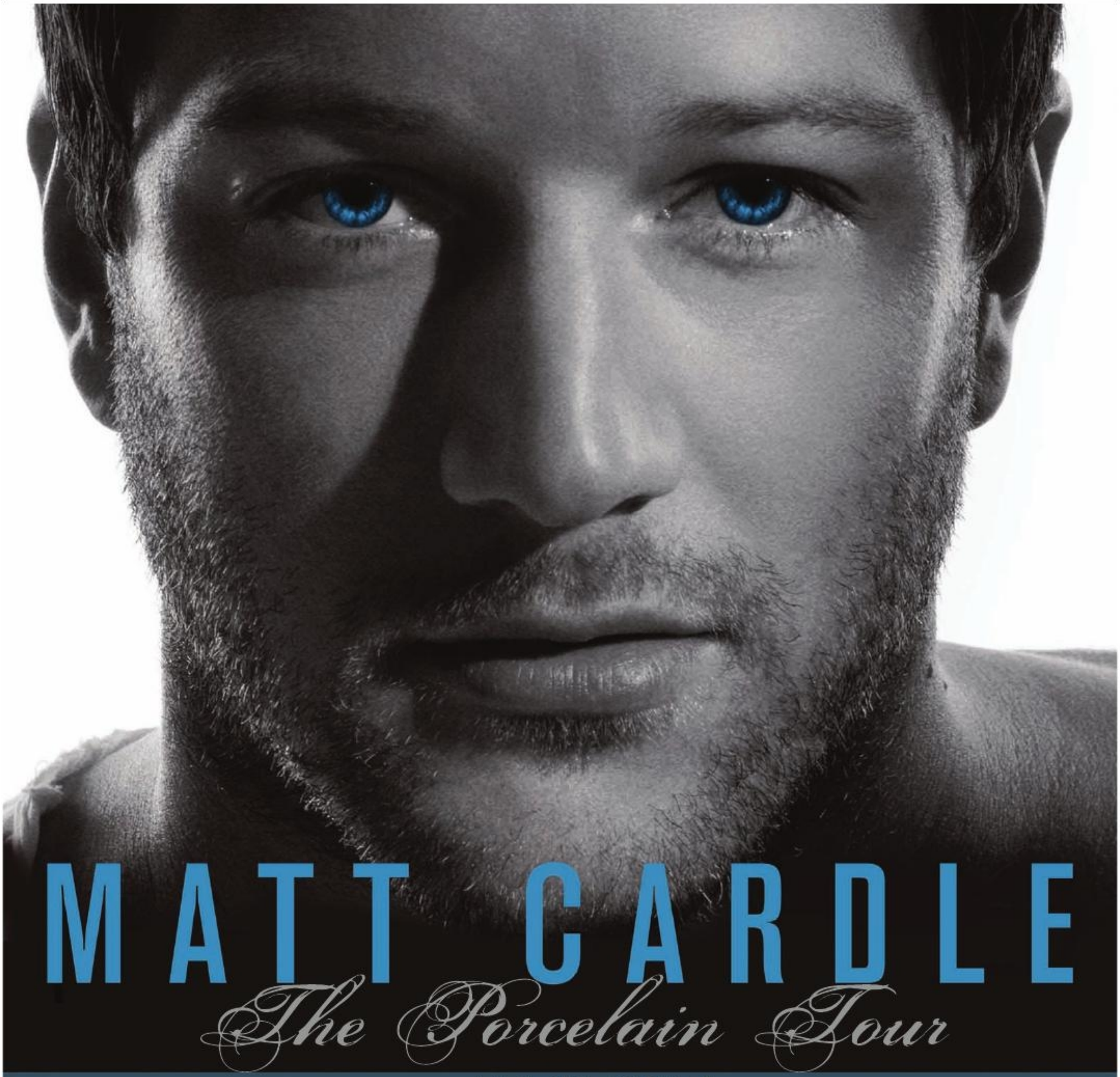
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WIN tickets to the NEC Home Improvement Show!

FOR the first time, The Home Improvement Show, proudly sponsored by Anglian Home Improvements, will be hosted at a second venue for 2014. In addition to its annual London show, the UK's fastest growing home improvement exhibition will also take place at the NEC, Birmingham from 27-30 March.

Whether you want to cut energy bills through implementing eco measures, create more space with an extension, basement or loft conversion, are in need of inspiration for a new colour scheme or after in vogue furnishings to update your internal decor, The Home Improvement Show promises to provide visitors with a whole host of features and the latest products from over 150 exhibitors.

With free daily masterclasses and seminars to bespoke one-to-one consultations with celebrity home improvement experts such as eco and architectural specialist, Oliver Heath, from BBC's Changing Rooms, interior design guru, Julia Kendell, from DIY SOS and 60-Minute Makeover, and gardening and landscaping professional, Matt James, from ITV's Love Your Garden.

Closing date:
Friday, March 21, 2014

Your project doesn't just have to be about your house – the garden matters too! Unearth new ways to maximise your property's outdoor space for family living, gardening or entertaining from a whole host of gardening and landscaping exhibitors. The two most important rooms in your home will be celebrated in The Kitchen & Bathroom Inspiration Zone brought to you by Kitchens, Bedrooms & Bathrooms magazine. Whatever your budget, this area brings together the latest in innovative products and stylish designs.

The Tricks of the Trade live demonstrations conducted by the show's resident DIY Doctor, Mike Edwards, offers recommendations on avoiding rogue traders and how to add the finishing touches yourself.

Standard tickets are £12 if booked before 3pm (with £1.75 transaction fee) on 26 March 2014 or £17 on the door (children under 16 go free). For more information and tickets, visit www.improveyourhomeshow.co.uk/nec or call the ticket hotline 0844 8540503.

Opening times: Thurs to Sunday 10am – 5pm

We have 10 pairs of tickets to give away and all you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is answer this simple question:

Q: Who sponsors The Home Improvement Show?

To enter more competitions like this, go online to www.oxfordshireguardian.co.uk

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Josh Florey feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 10 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps.

Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Oxfordshire from their local depots and Josh is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truthis that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Josh a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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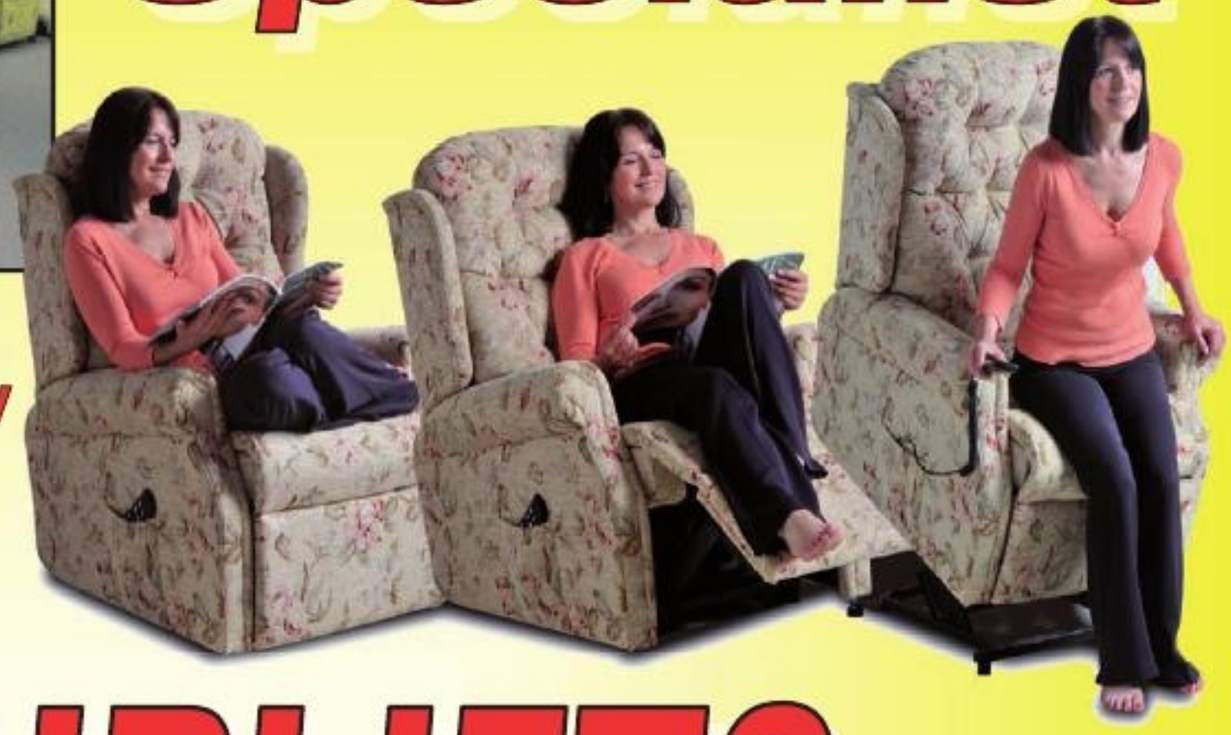

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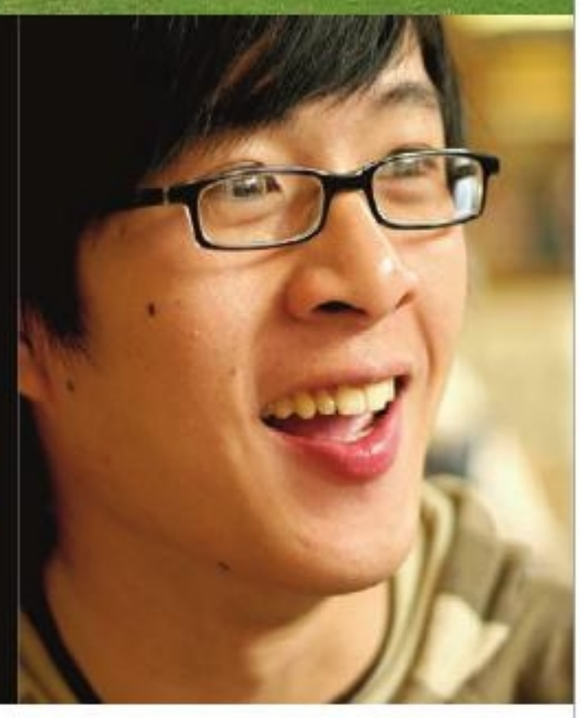

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Manufacturer unveils latest version of the highly-popular model

Focus on the new Ford

FORD Motor Company have revealed the advanced new Focus at this week's Geneva Show – the first European Ford to offer the voice-activated in-car connectivity system SYNC 2.

SYNC 2 is among a suite of life-enhancing new technologies making their European debut.

Ford's advanced in-car connectivity system features a high-resolution, eight-inch colour touch screen and advanced voice control for easier access to audio, navigation, climate control and compatible mobile phones. SYNC 2's navigation system also offers a split-screen display for the first time in Europe with detailed intersections, spoken street names, 3D highway junction and landmark views, plus the MICHELIN Guide and MICHELIN Green Guide.

SYNC features in more than eight million Ford vehicles since being launched in the U.S. in 2007. SYNC 2, the second generation of the system, is more intuitive and enables drivers to issue simpler "one-shot" navigation destinations. Pushing the voice control button and saying "I'm hungry" will bring up a list of local restaurants, for example.

REVIEW: FORD FOCUS
By **Andy Allans**

The new Ford Focus elevates the world's best-selling nameplate with a bolder, more emotive exterior design, a finely crafted, intuitive new interior, and major fuel economy improvements.

"Not satisfied with being number one, we wanted to blow people away with a stunning new version of the Focus that would build on this car's reputation for introducing advanced technology," said Stephen Odell, president of Ford of Europe, Middle East and Africa.

"New Focus will enable people to switch seamlessly between touch screen and voice commands, and also to control more in-car systems than ever before, while keeping their eyes on the road and their hands on the wheel."

The new Focus is the first Ford to offer Perpendicular Parking, a new hands-free parking technology that helps drivers reverse into spaces alongside other cars.

The current Focus introduced the parallel parking aid Active Park Assist that, at the push of a button, uses ultrasonic sensors to locate parking spaces and steer the vehicle while the driver controls the accelerator and brake.

The addition of two new sensors to the rear of the new Focus enables Perpendicular Parking to operate in the same way.

New Focus will also be offered with Ford's MyKey technology for the first time. MyKey enables owners to programme a key – usually for younger drivers – that restricts the top speed, reduces the maximum volume of the audio system, and can disable it altogether if driver and passengers are not using safety belts.

The improved Adaptive Front Lighting System adjusts the beams of the new Bi-Xenon HID headlamps to best suit the road layout. The system assesses the ambient light surrounding a vehicle, as well as objects in the road ahead and then adjusts the headlight beam angle and intensity to one of seven settings depending on the vehicle's speed, steering angle and distance to an object in front.

• The Ford Focus

At high speeds, such as on a motorway, the headlights are raised to project a longer, straighter beam for visibility further ahead; in towns where speeds are lower and street lighting more intense, the beam spreads out downwards for more intense illumination of the road immediately ahead. When cornering at lower speeds, the system projects a beam towards the side of the road to make cyclists and pedestrians more visible.

The new Focus takes the model's fun-to-drive personality up a level with enhanced handling and steering, and also offers significantly improved fuel efficiency on many versions thanks to new powertrain options.

The new Ford Focus will go on sale in Europe in the second half of 2014.

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10/59 Mitsubishi Colt CZ2 Amt 1.3 5Dr Automatic Blue, Remote Central Locking, CD Player £5890
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12/62 Vauxhall Corsa SXi 1.2 5Dr Grey, Air Conditioning, Remote Central Locking, CD Player £7790
10/10 Peugeot 308 1.6 VTi 120 S 5Dr Grey, Remote Central Locking, CD Player £7790
12/62 Peugeot 308 1.6 HDi 92 Access 5Dr Black, Remote Central Locking, CD Player £7850
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09 59 SEAT ALTEA 1.9 TDCI S EMOCION MPV, 5 spd diesel, silver met/grey, e/w&m, 5 spd, r/CD, c/l, a/c, front fogs, alloys, 8 airbags, ABS, ESP, Blue tooth,

FOCUS

13 13 FOCUS 1.0T PETROL 100PS 5 DR TITANIUM, 5 spd, ink blue met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, cruise control, climate control, auto lights & wipers, front fogs, alloys, HFS, one owner from new, low mileage 9,900 miles, 2 years manufacturers warranty **£13,595**

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11 61 FOCUS 1.6 PETROL 125PS ZETEC, 5dr, midnight sky met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, DAB radio & CD, PAS, Blue tooth, alloys, front fogs, heated windscreen, ABS, ESP, 29,000 miles **£10,395**

08 08 FOCUS 1.8 PETROL 125PS STYLE, 5dr, panther black/grey, c/l, r/CD, e/w&m, PAS, a/c, front fogs, 6 airbags, ESP, 2 owners from new, service history, 53,446 miles **£5,595**

12 61 FOCUS 1.6 PETROL 125PS ZETEC ESTATE, colorado red/grey, e/w&m, c/l, DAB r/CD, alloys, a/c, ABS, ESP, HFS, front fogs, 6 airbags, Blue tooth USB, rear park sensors, 12 months manufacturers warranty, one owner from new, FSH, 17,900 miles **£11,995**

11 60 FOCUS 1.6 PETROL SPORT, 5dr, frozen white/grey titanium, sat nav, Bluetooth, USB, rear park sensors, a/c, alloys, HFS, auto wipers & headlamps, front fogs, e/front windows & mirrors, ABS, 6 airbags, one owner, FSH, 33,500 miles **£8,995**

13 63 FOCUS 1.0 100PS PETROL ZETEC NAVIGATOR NEW MODEL, 5dr, deep impact blue met/grey, sat nav, B'tooth & USB, e/w & m, 17" alloys, privacy glass, ABS, EP, reverse park sensors, 6 airbags, 2 years old and 9 months manufacturer's warranty, only £20 RFL per year, 3,413 miles.... **£13,995**

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12 12 GRAND C MAX 1.6 TDCI 115PS DIESEL ZETEC 7 SEATER MPV, midnight sky met/grey, e/w&m, heated windscreen, 6 spd, DAB radio & CD, PAS, c/l, ABS, ESP, Blue tooth, rear park sensors, 6 airbags, alloys, very low mileage 4,228 miles, one owner from new, FSH..... **£13,995**

11 11 C MAX 1.6 PETROL 125PS TITANIUM, micastone met/grey, 5 spd, e/w&m, c/l, r/CD, heated windscreen, PAS, auto lights & wipers, ABS, ESP, convenience pack inc. park assist & fold mirrors, global closing, alloys, very low mileage 5,500 miles, one owner, FSH **£11,995**

13 13 B MAX ZETEC 1.0 ECOBOOST 125PS, 5 dr, midnight sky/grey, 5 spd, City pack, e/w&m, Ford Sync, power folding mirrors, rear park sensors, HFS, ABS, multiple airbags, alloys, ex-demonstrator, low mileage 8,800 miles, RFL £30 per year..... **£12,995**

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11 60 FIESTA ZETEC 1.4 PETROL AUTO, 5dr, vision blue met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, r/CD, front fogs, PAS, 5 airbags, 5 spd, a/c, HFS, alloys, ABS, ESP, very low mileage 7,000 miles, one owner from new, FSH **£8,995**

11 60 FIESTA 1.25 PETROL ZETEC 82PS, 5dr, ink blue met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, r/CD, front fogs, 5 airbags, aircon, HFS, alloys, ABS, ESP, one owner from new, FSH, 35,948 miles..... **£8,595**

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02 51 FOCUS LX 1.8 PETROL, 5dr, pepper red/grey, 5 spd, a/c, HFS, r/CD, e/w&m, PAS, alloys, 2 airbags, low mileage for age 58,460 miles, 2 owners from new, FSH..... **£2,995**

04 54 FOCUS .16I PETROL LX HATCH, tonic blue met/grey, 5 spd, a/c, PAS, e/w, heated front screen, alloys, r/CD, 4 airbags, ABS, 2 owners from new, 76,474 miles **£3,495**

03 53 FOCUS GHIA 2.0 PETROL AUTO ESTATE, deep rosso red met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, r & 6 CD player, PAS, climate, HFS, front fogs, alloys, 4 airbags, ABS, traction control, 3 owners from new, service history, low mileage for age 73,281 miles **£3,495**

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63 PLATE FOCUS 1.6 PETROL 5DR TITANIUM, 6 spd, powershift automatic, midnight sky met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, cruise & climate control, auto lights & wipers, front fogs, alloys, HFS, one owner from new, very low mileage, 2 years manufacturer's warranty

11 PLATE FIESTA 1.4 TDCI ZETEC 5DR DIESEL, ink blue met/grey, e/w&m, c/l, HFS, one owner from new, 9 months manufacturer's warranty, only £30RFL per year

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Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the new Kia 'VR7' range are: Urban 32.1 (8.8) – 52.3 (5.4), Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) – 78.5 (3.6), Combined 42.8 (6.6) – 67.3 (4.2). CO_2 emissions are 148 – 99 g/km. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. 7 year /100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. For terms and exclusions visit kia.co.uk or see your local dealer. Price, Reevoo score and number of reviews correct at time of going to press and specification is subject to change without notice. Quote taken from Kia customer reviews. Directly comparable quotes occur across the Kia range. ^Models shown: Picanto 3-dr 'VR7' 1.0 68bhp 5-speed manual @ £8,795 including customer saving of £750 and excluding optional metallic paint at £455; Rio 5-dr 'VR7' 1.25 84bhp 5-speed manual @ £11,095 including customer saving of £1,000 and excluding optional metallic paint at £455; cee'd 5-dr 'VR7' 1.4 98bhp 6-speed manual @ £13,995 including customer saving of £1,000 and excluding optional metallic paint at £475. OTR price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' Government Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and Vehicle First Registration Fee. Retail customers only. Customer savings vary by model derivative. Ask your dealer for full details. †3 years' servicing (Kia Care-3) for £99 offer is only valid on applicable 'VR7' models. Log onto kia.co.uk/care3 for full details. Subject to availability on vehicles registered before 31 March 2014. Participating dealers only. *4.9% APR representative available on Kia Conditional Sale on Picanto, Rio and cee'd models. 10% minimum deposit required on cee'd models. Maximum term of 36 months. Offer not available in conjunction with any other offer. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. 18's or over. Guarantees / Indemnities may be required. Kia Motors Finance RH1 1SR. We can introduce you to a limited number of carefully selected finance providers. We may receive a commission from them for the introduction. Customer savings vary by model derivative. Ask your dealer for full details. All based on 6,000 Miles Per Annum.

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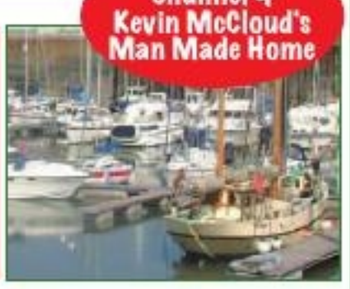
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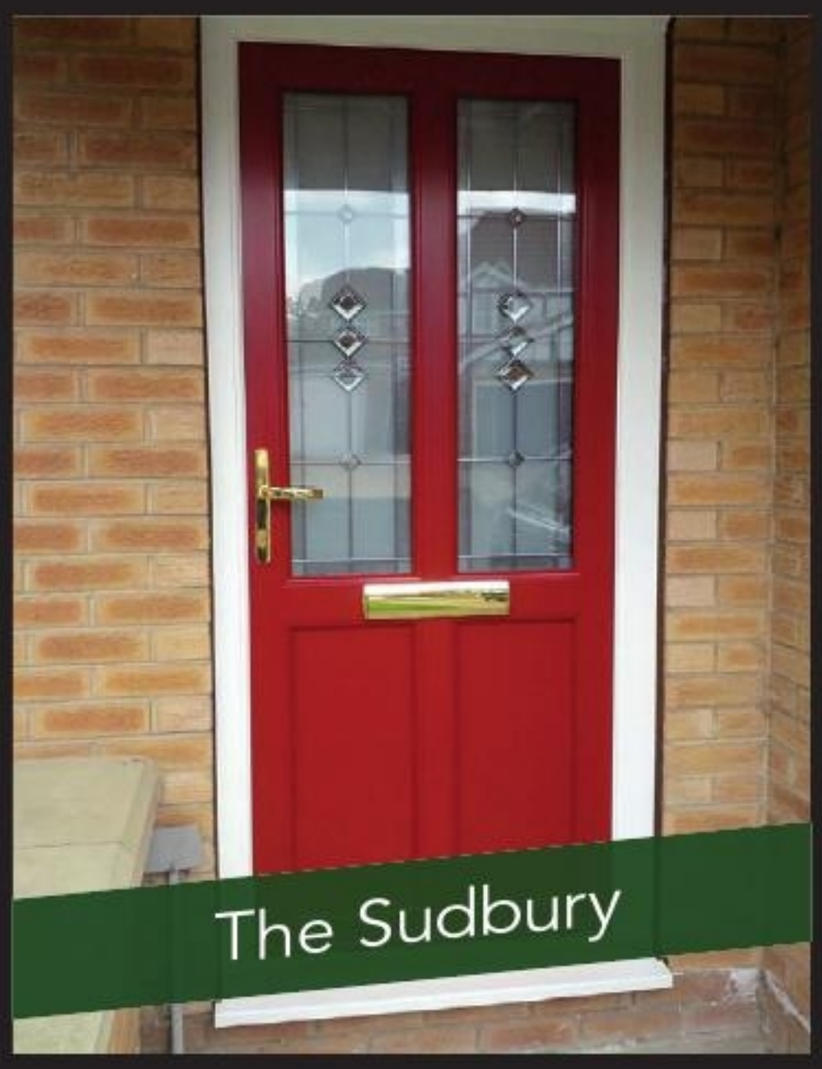

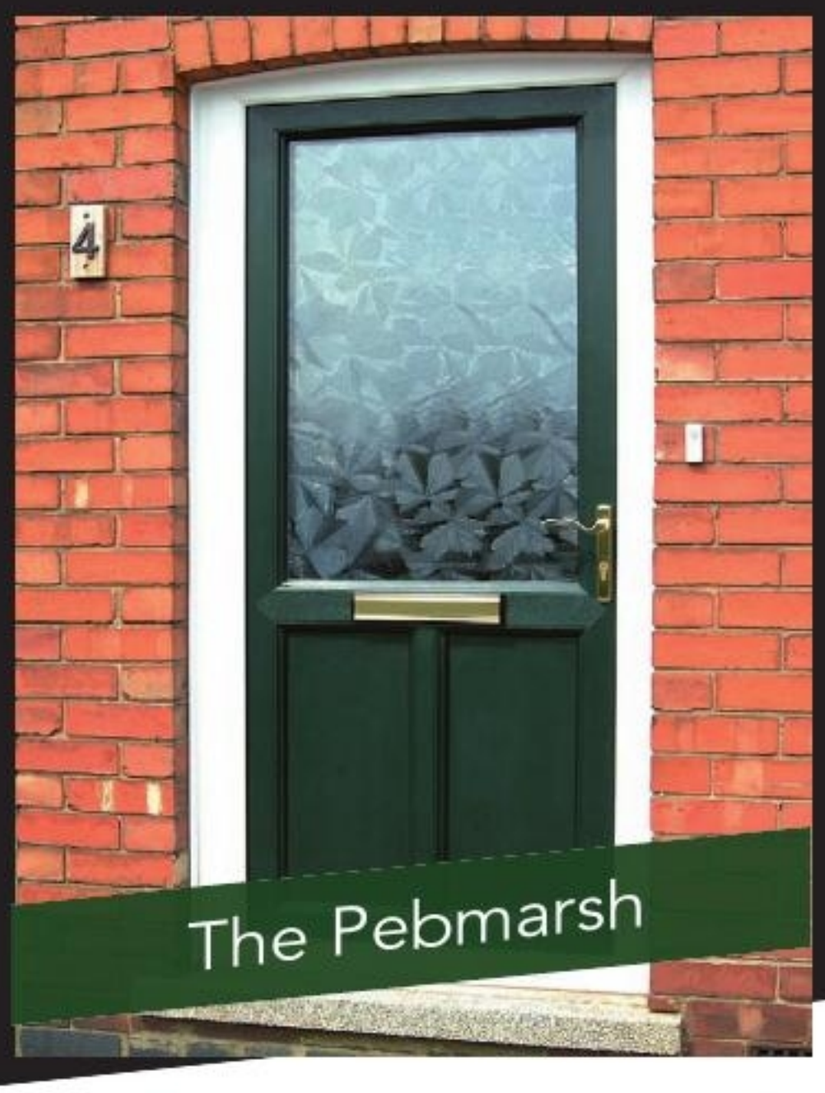

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Skipper wants U's to put Dale defeat behind them

OXFORD United captain Jake Wright is urging his team-mates not to dwell on last weekend's 3-0 defeat to Rochdale as the U's host fellow promotion chasers Burton this Saturday.

United are on a three-match winning run at home but have only taken one point from their last three games, which have all been away from the Kassam Stadium.

Last Saturday's defeat saw the U's slip to fifth in Sky Bet League Two but results were fairly kind to them with Scunthorpe and Fleetwood dropping points.

However, this weekend's opponents, Burton, jumped above United into fourth after a 2-1 win at home to Accrington.

Wright, who returned to United's starting line-up against Rochdale after being out injured for over a month, now wants last weekend's defeat put well and truly to bed.

"Win our two homes games, that's what we need to do now," Wright told the club.

"We've got to dust ourselves down and go again.

"I know people will be saying 'it's not good enough' and it's not but we've got 12 games left so we can't dwell on it for too long."

Wright was honest in his assessment of United's defeat at Rochdale which saw Scott Hogan score a hat-trick.

The 27-year-old added: "In the second half they came out and were better than us.

"I don't think we were good enough all over the pitch.

"They dominated the game and we deserved nothing out of it."

Meanwhile, chairman Ian Lenagan says the club is half way through the process of appointing a new manager.

He told the club: "The process is one which takes into account that we are looking for someone for two, three, four, five seasons, not just for the next 12 games.

"We can't panic into doing something, we have got to choose the right manager, that is very important for Oxford United, I've known that for a long time."

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Find us on Twitter @OxfordGuardian

• Jake Wright (Picture by Steve Daniels)

Thame battle to stalemate with Reading

ONLY a handful of games in the Hellenic Premier Division survived the weekend weather, as once again many matches had to be called off.

Thame United were the only Oxfordshire side to see competitive action on Saturday, as they battled to a 2-2 draw with Reading Town.

They played again on Tuesday night, but this time were beaten after a 4-3 thriller against Highmoor Ibis.

Kidlington were also able to play on Tuesday as they beat Holyport 2-0, while Shrivenham were knocked out of the Hellenic Floodlit Cup after a 1-0 loss to Brimscombe and Thrupp.

Thame are now seventh in the league standings on 47 points, level with Saturday's opponents Reading, while Kidlington have moved into ninth with 43 points.

All the teams will hope to be playing this Saturday, as Wantage Town make the trip to Abingdon United, Shrivenham are away to Highmoor Ibis, Kidlington head to Newbury and Abingdon Town visit Bracknell Town.

Kidlington then return to league action on Tuesday with a trip to Holyport, while Wantage host Wootton Bassett Town.

City beaten by basement boys Workington

OXFORD City suffered more misery on Tuesday night as they were beaten away at Skrill North basement side Workington.

Ben McKenna drove in from eight yards half-way through the first half to complete a bad few days for Mike Ford's men.

City had just suffered a three-point deduction, relegating them to second from bottom, for fielding an ineligible player.

Liam Malone had picked up five yellow cards, but played in the club's 2-0 victory over Worcester City on December 8.

City say the mistake was made due to an administrative error.

Meanwhile, Ford has boosted his squad with the double capture of defender Daniel Akubuine and winger Viv Soloman-Otabor.

Akubuine, a former Watford and Brighton trainee, joins from Conference Premier outfit Nuneaton Town.

And Soloman-Otabor has put pen to paper on a loan deal until the end of the season. He is currently on Birmingham City's books.

City have 24 points from 27 matches.

Hawks and Chinnor both lose

HENLEY Hawks Rugby Club recorded another loss in the SSE National League 1 on Saturday, as they were beaten 19-10 by Old Albanian.

Hawks have won just once in their last 10 fixtures and have slipped to second bottom in the standings, although they have a 26-point advantage over basement boys Hull Ionians.

It was a difficult day as well for Chinnor, who suffered a fourth successive loss following a 29-13 scoreline against Cambridge.

Chinnor have also dropped down the leaderboard, and are now 14th in the SSE National League 2 South.

Hawks will host Wharfedale this weekend, while Chinnor are at home against Cornish All Blacks.

Elsewhere, Oxford Harlequins' dominant season continued, with a 33-20 win away to Cheltenham in the South West 1 East league.

Witney extended their winning run to seven games in the same division, beating Maidenhead at home 25-11.

And Grove made it a hat-trick for Oxfordshire's teams in that league, with a 35-19 victory over Marlow.

Harlequins host Devizes on Saturday, while Witney travel to Towcestrians and Grove are away to Newbury Blues.

Lotus and Caterham endure 'tough' pre-season testing

WEST Oxfordshire's two Formula One teams endured a difficult final pre-season test in Bahrain, as they set the slowest times on each of the four days.

Lotus could only manage a total of 127 laps during the test with Romain Grosjean setting their best lap on Sunday with a time of 1:39.302, six seconds slower than pacesetters Williams.

Pastor Maldonado's best effort was a lap of 1:40.599, although this was set last Thursday when the teams were not concentrating on performance runs.

Caterham were able to get more running with a total of 297 laps, with rookie driver Marcus Ericsson setting the team's personal best lap of 1:38.083 on Saturday.

In comparison, Kamui Kobayashi's best time came on Sunday, with a lap of 1:38.391.

Team principal Cyril Abiteboul said: "It has certainly been as tough a pre-season as we expected, but to finish as by far the most reliable Renault-powered team is positive.

"A lot of hard work has been put in by the whole team and I would also like to thank the staff at Renault Sport F1."

Banbury-based Marussia were also in action last week, with Max Chilton recording a lap of 1:36.835 on Sunday.

• Kamui Kobayashi drove last Thursday and Sunday at the final pre-season test in Bahrain (Picture courtesy of Caterham F1)

Sport Bites

Pegged back

OXFORD City Stars suffered their second home defeat in a row on Sunday, as they were narrowly beaten 5-4 by London Haringey Racers.

Goals from Josh Oliver, Alan Green, Jeff Sykora and Josh Florey weren't enough for Stars to snatch the win, despite being 2-0 ahead during the first period.

They are currently second in the National Ice Hockey League South 2 standings, and next play Cardiff Devils on March 16.

Marching on

OXFORD University Hockey Club's strong second half of the season has continued in fine form with a 5-0 win against Milton Keynes on Saturday.

But there was disappointment for Oxford Hawks, who lost their home game against Spencer 4-3.

Oxford University are currently fourth in the South Hockey League Premier Division with 34 points, while Hawks are 10 points further back in eighth.

Driver Sean's engine woes

A DOUBLE engine failure cost Chipping Norton racing driver Sean Walkinshaw dearly in his pre-race preparations for the EuroFormula Open Winter Series in Paul Ricard last weekend.

He could only finish 11th with his new team Campos Racing, after the blown engines cost the 20-year-old valuable setup time during the practice sessions.

Walkinshaw said: "It has been a frustrating start to the Winter Series, that's the best way to sum it up, but there are some positives to take away."

DIDCOT Guardian Sport

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IT'S ABOUT THE PLAYERS

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Manager hails team after Didcot reach highest position this season

By Jack Johnson
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

DIDCOT Town's joint manager Ian Concannon praised his players after the Railwaymen recorded a fourth away win in a row last Saturday with a 2-0 victory at Clevedon.

Pablo Haysham and John Mills both scored in the first half, while Alex Williams denied Matt Thorne from the spot, to earn Diddy not only a win but a first clean sheet since November.

The win kept Diddy 15th in Division One South & West, their highest league position of the season, and Concannon believes the players and coach Andy Sinnott deserve all the credit.

"When you see that it's the highest position we have been in all season, as much as it is pleasing for me and Jamie (Heapy), we haven't done much to be fair," said Concannon.

"We've brought a couple of players in but it is disappointing to see us 15th because we are so used to seeing Didcot in the top half of the table.

"As much as Jamie and myself might get a pat on the back, it's the players that take the plaudits for it, and not only that Andy Sinnott deserves a massive amount of credit for what he has done in such a short space of time.

"He has given us ideas, values and opinions and he has given the lads very simple explanations of why we were not very good when we had the ball, and that's down to change so a lot of credit should go to Andy.

"It's nice when you're winning and if we can build on this and go on a bit of an unbeaten run, who knows where we might end up."

With James Foster unavailable, Williams returned between the sticks last Saturday and is set to keep his place, with the former also missing for this week's home game against fifth-placed Tiverton Town.

Concannon said: "Alex got the opportunity to fill the void and he did really well.

"He's a really good lad, his attitude is spot on, he trains hard and he never lets us down and with Fozzy being away for two weeks, Alex will come in and be a good deputy for us.

"He's been out the side for a little while but he's kept on going and he was good for us last Saturday, credit to him."

After four consecutive away wins, Didcot will now look to earn their first victory at Loop Meadow since Boxing Day.

Concannon continued: "The home form is something we need to address.

"Tiverton will be a really good test on Saturday.

"I think it will be a good game of football and we're certainly looking to win the game without a shadow of a doubt."

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• *Alex Williams (right) impressed on his return to the side last Saturday (Picture by Roger Neal)*

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